

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04

H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 DPW-01 DHA-02 AID-05 EB-08

TRSY-02 IO-13 OMB-01 /109 W

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FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 722

INFO AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY RANGOON

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

CINCPAC HONOLULU

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 7117

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, EAIR, CB, LA, TH, VN

SUBJECT: THAI-INDOCHINESE RELATIONS

REF: STATE 66450

SUMMARY: DURING A RATHER QUIET PERIOD IN THAI RELATIONS WITH NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES OF INDOCHINA, RTG HAS ANNOUNCED THAT HANOI HAS AGREED TO RECEIVE A THAI DELEGATION TO DISCUSS OVER-FLIGHT ISSUE. THAI HOPE THAT OTHER TOLKS CAN BE HELD WITH VIET-NAMESE IN BANGKOK DURING FORTHCOMING ESCAP MEETING LATER THIS MONTH. END SUMMARY.

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1. FOREIGN MINISTRY WORKING-LEVEL OFFICIAL RESPONSIBLE FOR RELATIONS WITH CAMBODIA, LAOS, AND VIET-NAM, DISCUSSED PRESENT STATE OF PLAY IN MEETING WITH EMBOFF APRIL 1. COMMENTS AS FOLLOWS.

2. VIET-NAM. OFFICIAL SEEMED PLEASED THATWOODCOCK STATED CATEGORICALLY IN HANOI RECENTLY THAT U.S. TROOPS ARE NOT

RETURNING TO THAILAND. HE SAID VIETNAMESE APPEAR SOMEWHAT OBSESSED WITH THIS SUBJECT, ACCORDING TO A NUMBER OF INDICATIONS THAI HAVE BEEN RECEIVING THROUGH DIPLOMATIC SOURCES. HE ALSO SUGGESTED THAT IF THE USG WANTS TO REASSURE ASEAN NATIONS THAT U.S.-SRV MOVEMENT TOWARD NORMALIZATION OF TIES WILL NOT DETRACT FROM OUR CLOSE RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER COUNTRIES IN THE REGION AND THAT IT WILL BE INTENDED TO CONTRIBUTE TO LESSENING OF TENSIONS IN REGION, BEST CHANNEL FOR US TO COMMUNICATE THIS IS THROUGH MECHANISM OF U.S.-ASEAN CONSULTATIONS.

3. STATE OF THAILAND'S OWN RELATIONS WITH VIET-NAM CONTINUES TO BE UNCLEAR, SOURCE COMMENTED. HE OBSERVED THAT DISCUSSIONS WHICH HAVE CONTINUED PERIODICALLY IN VIENTIANE BETWEEN SRV AND RTG HEADS OF MISSION, AS WELL AS INTERCESSION FROM HONG KONG AUTHORITIES WITH VIETNAMESE, APPARENTLY RESULTED IN SRV AGREEMENT TO ACCEPT THAI DELEGATION AT DATE NOT YET FIXED TO NEGOTIATE OVERFLIGHT RIGHTS, WHICH UNDERSECRETARY WONG PHONNIKON ANNOUNCED MAR 31. SOURCE NOTED THAT RTG IS SAITING WITH CONSIDERABLE INTEREST TO LEARN WHOM VIETNAMESE WILL SEND TO BANGKOK LATER THIS MONTH FOR ESCAP CONCIL MEETING, BELIEVING THAT IT REPRESENTS BEST IMMEDIATE PROSPECT FOR BILATERAL THAI-VIETNAMESE TALKS. OFFICIAL SAID HE SAW NO DIRECT CONNECTION BETWEEN THAI PROGRESS IN RELATIONS WITH VIET-NAM AND U.S. PROGRESS, NOTING THAT HIS COUNTRY EMBARKED UPON ITS OWN PARTICULAR COURSE CONSIDERABLY BEFORE WE DID.

4. LAOS. SUPERFICIALLY, AT LEAST, RELATIONS SEEM TO BE CONFIDENTIAL

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PROCEEDING RATHER SMOOTHLY, PROBABLY REPRESENTING AN "UP" PERIOD IN THE SUCCESSION OF "UPS AND DOWN" WHICH CHARACTERIZE THE RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES THE OFFICIAL SAID. HE REMARKED THAT HE WAS PRESENT FOR THE TURNOVER MAR 21 OF THE FOURTH LAO PLANE TO PDRL OFFICIALS IN NONG KHAI. LAO DELEGATION WAS APPREHENSIVE FOR ITS SECURITY, AND RTG HAD TO PROVIDE CONSIDERABLE EXTRA PROTECTION. ON THAT OCCASION. LAO MFA OFFICIAL INFORMED HIM THAT HIS GOVERNMENT CONTINUS TO SEARCH FOR APPROPRIATE AMBASSADOR TO SEND TO BANGKOK, WHICH THAI CONSIDERED TO BE A POSITIVE NOTE. EMBOFF REMARKED THAT LAO CHARGE SAID THREE WEEKS AGO THAT A RANKING PARTY OFFICIAL HAS BEEN SELECTED FOR THE BANGKOK AMBASSADORIAL ASSIGNMENT, CAUSING SOURCE TO SPECULATE THAT IF TRUE, IF MAY HAVE ACCOUNTED FOR CHARGE'S DECISION TO DEFECT AT THIS TIME (SEPTEL). OFFICIAL ALSO SAID VIETNAMESE HAVE BEEN INDIRECTLY PRESSURING THAILAND TO NAME AMBASSADOR TO LAOS, REASON BEING THAT THEY WANTED THAI-VIETNAMESE DISCUSSIONS IN VIENTIANE TO BE BETWEEN PERSONS OF EQUAL RANK. OFFICIAL FORESA PROBABILITY

OF MORE MANEUVERING BETWEEN LAO AND THAI BEFORE AM-
BASSADORS ACTUALLY NAMED.

5. ASKED WHETHER PRESS REPORT THAT VIENTIANE-BANGKOK FLIGHTS
WILL RESUME IN TWO WEEKS IS ACCURATE, MFA OFFICIAL SAID
THAT TIME FRAME APPEARS POSSIBLE. THAI AIRWAYS TEAM RE-
TURNED BANGKOK FROM DISCUSSIONS IN VIENTIANE LATE LAST WEEK
TO CLEAR TENTATIVE RESULTS WITH RTG AND IS RETURNING TO
LAOS. WITH TAC APPARENTLY CONCEDED ISSUE OF TICKET SALES
TO LAO (TICKETS FOR BOTH LAO AND THAI FLIGHTS FROM ONE
COUNTRY WILL BE SOLD BY THAT COUNTRY), FINAL QUESTION IS
ONE OF NUMBER OF FLIGHTS. PARTIES HAVE ELABORATED "RATHER
COMPLEX" FORMULA FOR ASSURING PARITY OF FLIGHTS, ON WHICH
FINAL AGREEMENT IS STILL REQUIRED PRIOR TO SIGNATURE OF
AGREEMENT TO RESUME FLIGHTS.

6. CAMBODIA. RTG DESIRE TO HAVE IENG SARY VISIT HERE
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DURING CURRENT SOUTH AND SOUTHEAST ASIAN SWING DID NOT
SUCCEED BECAUSE TIMING WAS NOT RIGHT OFFICIAL SUGGESTED.
THAI ASKED BOTH SINGAPORE AND MALAYSIA TO CONVEY TO IENG
SARY THAI DESIRE FOR GOOD RELATIONS WITH CAMBODIA; RTG
HAS RECEIVED NO REPORTS OF RESULTS TO DATE. THERE WAS
SOME THINKING WITHIN TRG THAT IENG SARY UNDERTOOK TO
VISIT THOSE TWO COUNTRIES AS PART OF CAMBODIAN EFFORT TO
DIVIDE ASEAN, BUT THAT THEORY HAS NOW BEEN DISCARDED.
OFFICIALS OF CAMBODIAN AND THAI LIAISON OFFICES HAVE NOT
MET FOR CONSIDERABLE PERIOD DUE TO ALLEGED ABSENCE OF
CAMBODIAN OFFICE CHIEF. OFFICIAL FOUND SATISFACTION AT
LEAST IN FACT THAT CAMBODIAN AND LAO BORDERS HAVE BEEN
RATHER QUIET IN RECENT WEEKS. (BANGKOK WORLD CLAIMED
SAME DAY CLASH WITH KC AND INSURGENTS IN TA PHRAYA DIS-
TRICT, NEAR CAMBODIAN BORDER, RESULTING IN DEATHS OF TWO
THAI SOLDIERS.)

7. COMMENT. SOURCE SAID IT IS DIFFICULT TO PREDICT WHEN
THERE WILL BE FORWARD MOVEMENT IN THAILAND'S RELATIONS
WITH ALL THREE COUNTIES OF INDOCHINA. GREATER PASSAGE
OF TIME TO PERMIT THINGS TO CONTINUE TO SETTLE DOWN MAY
HELP THE PROCESS HE CONCLUDED. VIEW AMONG DIPLOMATIC
OBSERVERS IN BANGKOK IS THAT POSSIBLE DISCUSSIONS BE-
TWEEN VIETNAMESE DELEGATION TO ESCAP CONFERENCE AND RTG
CONSTITUTE NEXT IMPORTANT STEP ON SLOW ROAD TO IMPROVE-
MENT OF THAI RELATIONS WITH THE MOST IMPORTANT COUNTRY
OF INDOCHINA.
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